

Medical Infection Disease System (MIDS) provides performance standards for limiting the spread of infectious diseases in hospitals. My legislation would require Medicare to make use of these standards and others already developed either in government or in the private sector. The Secretary would be required to establish systems to adopt these standards in Medicare and educate providers on their use.

Providers would be required to report quality of care and medical error data in a completely confidential system, and the Secretary would be required to establish data systems to monitor the performance of providers regarding quality of care and medical errors. The Secretary would be required to use standard data so that comparisons could be made across providers.

My legislation does not envision a punitive system, but rather a system of working together to achieve improvements in quality and error reduction. I believe that most medical errors are the result of systems failures, and my legislation would focus on correcting these systems errors. I also believe that improvement must come from within health care organizations, rather than being imposed from outside. That is why my legislation would focus on identifying and correcting systems failures from within. However, I also believe that information on best practices and standards must be collected at the national level and shared with health care providers.

This legislation would build on the organizations that are already charged with sharing information and helping to improve quality of care are the Peer Review Organizations (PROs). The Secretary would be required to develop standards and train the PROs regarding those standards. PROs, in turn, would train health care providers in implementing those standards. PROs would also be required to investigate serious failures by providers to meet quality standards, including serious medical errors, and work with providers to implement corrective action plans to modify systems or take other actions to improve quality and minimize errors.

As a way of increasing the confidence of providers in the PROs, fraud and abuse activities of the PROs would be phased out, and their work would be limited to quality related activities. The legislation would change the name of the PROs to "Quality Improvement Organizations" in keeping with their new emphasis in Medicare.

The Secretary would be required to monitor quality and safety through a national data system, as recommended by virtually all of the organizations reporting on quality of care. To help providers feel more comfortable in reporting problems with quality or medical errors, the Secretary would be required to establish a confidential reporting system so that physicians, employees of providers, and others would be able to report errors or other failures on a confidential basis. Employees would be provided whistle blower protection for reporting quality failures and errors. Providers who achieve outstanding results in meeting quality standards and minimizing errors would be rewarded with the designation of "Medicare Provider of Excellence."

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE VETERANS' COMMEMORATION ACT OF 2000

HON. JAY INSLEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 5, 2000

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the Veterans Commemoration Act of 2000. This piece of legislation will help to alleviate a serious impediment to adequate health care for our veterans.

Many veterans have trouble getting to and from VA hospitals. The legislation that I am introducing today would create a coin commemorating Executive Order 5398, signed by President Herbert Hoover on July 21, 1930, which established the Veterans Administration. The proceeds from the sale of this coin would fund a transportation program for veterans, provided by the Disabled American Veterans.

This program provides a much-needed service to our nation's veterans. The DAV provides transportation services to veterans to and from VA hospitals. Considering the fact that many veterans live far away from VA hospitals and are disabled, the lack of transportation can be a very serious impediment to adequate health care.

In my home state of Washington, the Veterans Administration hospital in Seattle serves the entire Pacific Northwest. Many of the patients who rely upon the care provided by the VA have severe disabilities that prevent them from easily accessing the clinic. Public transportation serves those veterans that live in the Metropolitan area, but for the thousands of veterans without access to public transportation, the DAV steps in to provide door to door services. This essential program is truly the missing link for veterans' health care.

The DAV has recognized this need by creating the transportation program. This program has been very successful so far. But it only operates in a few select areas and serves only a handful of veterans. This program should be available to all veterans, but the DAV simply cannot afford to fund a project of that magnitude. This bill would create the funds necessary to expand this program.

With no cost to the taxpayer, we can help our nation's veterans and show them that their needs are important. We must show our support to the brave men and women who have risked their lives to serve this country. This unique program, provided by the DAV, deserves our support.

Today I stand with over 150 of my colleagues to introduce this legislation. This bipartisan bill has diverse and broad support. We have the time and the support to pass this bill now. We should not wait for the next Congress to take action when we have the ability and the will to do so now. I urge my colleagues to stand with me and with the Disabled American Veterans to pass this bill and support our veterans.

THE CHILDREN OF SIERRA LEONE

HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 5, 2000

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, if you are paying attention to the House floor at this mo-

ment, please listen very closely to what some of my colleagues and I are discussing. Because we are talking about saving children who are being savaged and we desperately need your help.

If you can, please stop what you are doing for a second—I know we're all very busy right now, but again this is important. So, please, stop what you are doing and remember for a moment what you felt like when you were a child, especially if you had moments in which you felt very vulnerable in any way.

Now, take that feeling, and try to imagine living in a community ripped by the throes of war—your parents are missing, friends, sisters and brothers beaten, broken and battered, if even still alive.

And as you imagine this life, now look down at your arms and legs. Imagine an arm or a leg or more mutilated and even severed from your body. Think about that. Can you even bear to imagine it?

As hard as it is to believe, there are children today who don't have to imagine this horror because they live it. They see where their arms and legs once were. They know that their family has been destroyed.

They are the children of Sierra Leone.

And no matter what your politics are, humanity calls us to act. Support funding for peacekeeping now. Support Tony Hall's bill to halt the illegal diamond trade that funds this butchering now. Don't wait. Support ending the horrific suffering of these children now.

CELEBRATION IN PITTSBURGH

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 5, 2000

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call my colleagues' attention to an upcoming ceremony that will be held in Pittsburgh on October 13, 2000, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Homestead Grays and the 40th anniversary of Bill Mazeroski's World Series-winning home run. The joint ceremony serves to highlight Pittsburgh's long history of outstanding professional baseball.

The Homestead Grays was a Negro League baseball team that was originally formed by local African American steelworkers. The Homestead Grays played baseball from 1900 until Major League baseball teams were integrated 50 years ago, and the club won a number of pennants. The Grays, incidentally, played the first night game in Pittsburgh baseball history—against the Kansas City Monarchs at Forbes Field on July 25, 1930.

The Homestead Grays were known for several outstanding players who could compete with the best baseball players of the time, white or black. A number of these players were eventually inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Oscar Charleston, first baseman and manager for the Grays—with a lifetime batting average of .357, the ranking of fourth on the all-time home run list for the Negro Leagues, and fielding that was deemed superior to that of his white contemporary Ty Cobb—was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1976. Smoky Joe Williams, who pitched for the Grays, was voted the greatest pitcher in Negro League history in 1952, beating out Leroy